

Resistance to History

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Richard Ohmann is in my view one of the founders of cultural studies in the U.S., and, on the basis of his book *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century*, ought to be recognized as one of its two or three leading practitioners. The fact that he is not typically recognized as such is what this essay will try to explain. I will first discuss Ohmann's career and the nature of his contribution, making the case for its importance. Next, I will briefly support my contention that Ohmann has not been given his due within the field of cultural studies. Focusing on the reception of *Selling Culture*, I will show that, while this book has been well received, it has not made the kind impact it merits. Finally, I will argue that the main reason Ohmann's work has not received its due is a deeply ingrained resistance to history within not only cultural studies, but Marxism and literary studies as well.

Ohmann may not be as important to Cultural Studies in America as Raymond Williams was to the movement in Britain, but he is perhaps a more representative figure, having not only inspired the movement, but also actually contributed to it. As Jeffrey Williams's essay in this volume details, Ohmann trained at Harvard in the 1950s in the company of such future theoretical luminaries as Paul de Man and Edward Said. While we don't normally think of 1950s Harvard as a hot bed of theory, the New Critics' recent transformation of the practice of literary studies had made theoretical questions suddenly much more urgent. While few if any of these scholars would then have expected to have careers focused mainly on theory, many felt it necessary to explore theory in order to successfully study literature. Ohmann's English Institute essay, "Prolegomena to the Analysis of Prose Style," is an example of such an inquiry—which in his case was followed by application in the form of the book, *Shaw: the Style and the Man*. But while De Man, and, in a different way, Said went on to be emblematic of the dominance of theory in the 1970s and 1980s, something else happened to Ohmann. Where their later work developed more or less continuously out of their training and early publications, Ohmann's career took a sharp turn in the late 1960s.

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That turn, which is described in *English in America*, was motivated in large part by Ohmann's involvement in opposition to the Vietnam War. "For me the wish to understand the MLA arose in 1968, when I became involved in incidents that are now part of history" (27). Several people, including Ohmann's friend, Louis Kampf of MIT, were arrested for putting up anti-war posters in the lobby of the Americana Hotel in New York during the MLA convention. The "modest political insurgency" Ohmann, Kampf, and others had planned resulted in anti-war resolutions being passed at the organization's business meeting, and it led to Kampf becoming MLA president. For our purposes, however, its most important effect was on Ohmann's career and his decision to write *English in America*. As he says there, "I did not intend to write this book. I meant to write one on syntax and style, for which Oxford University Press wrote me a contract and made me an advance in 1963... Then I wanted to write a book about speech acts and literature. These would have been professional books, advancing 'our' knowledge and my career" (4). Ohmann's change of direction was not, of course, simply a response to contemporary politics; he says he was growing dissatisfied with the profession for some time prior to the events of 1968. Yet even this unhappiness with the overspecialization and irrelevance of the academic humanities make's Ohmann's critique in *English in America* representative of the New Left.

As I have previously argued, cultural studies in the U.S. is the academic outgrowth of the New Left, which was in this country a movement composed mainly of students and devoted almost exclusively to activism (Shumway, "The Sixties"). While one can point to the *Port Huron Statement* and a few other documents as instances of intellectual work, there was nothing here equivalent to the group of British scholars who founded *New Left Review*. Cultural studies in the U.S. was largely the work of academics who were influenced by New Left politics, but the shape that it has taken has reflected the impact of 1960s political struggles on the academy. Both women's studies and African American studies were direct responses to these struggles, and they have had a major impact on cultural studies here. But equally important was the challenge to the ideal of the disinterested scholar, and *English in America* was a major statement of the dissatisfaction many felt with an academy that could not engage contemporary social and political questions—or worse, which was often complicit with the most socially repressive and politically regressive forces. Though it doesn't say so explicitly, *English in America* is in fact a statement of the need for cultural studies.

A final impact of the New Left on the academy was the taking up of works of mass culture as serious objects of study. The New Left came from the first generation to have grown up on television and rock and roll. The latter, according to Todd Gitlin, "named us a generation" (43). As I put it in "The Sixties, the New Left, and the Emergence of Cultural Studies in the United States," "It is not surprising... that a generation that had treated rock stars as intellectu-

als, that is, serious contributors to public discourse, would think popular culture worthy of academic study" (247). Cultural studies became so preoccupied with contemporary popular culture that it sometimes seemed as if "cultural" meant "mass cultural." Michael Sprinker criticized cultural studies as an enterprise engaged in "generalizing from movies, television, pulp novels, and so forth to an understanding of culture as either mass mystification (roughly the Frankfurt School view) or as the site of popular resistance (as in much of the work fostered by the Birmingham Centre)" (390). Sprinker published this remark the year after *Selling Culture* appeared, so we cannot blame (or praise) Ohmann for leading the movement in this direction.

Selling Culture's significance lies not in its taking up of mass culture, but rather, in its historical understanding of mass culture, an understanding which allows Ohmann to refuse the binary of mystification and resistance. Ohmann's history locates the rise of mass culture at the end of the nineteenth century, when American capitalism underwent a radical transformation. The change entailed several components including the shift from free-market to monopoly capitalism, progressive era reforms, in which government regulation came to protect businesses from the ravages of unrestrained competition, and movement of capital investment shifted away from railroads as "the wealth of the country flowed into...factories that mass-produced more and more of what people used" (*Selling Culture* 50). One of few minor complaints by reviewers about *Selling Culture* was that this narrative is not particularly original. Ohmann admits in the preface, that he "pillaged—gratefully!—the works of scholars in several disciplines," and in another place, he lists many of the scholars who preceded him in making similar claims (*Selling Culture* vii; review of Schneirov, 51-52). While economists and historians have been arguing this case at least since the 1960s, Alan Trachtenberg was probably the first to make the case in cultural terms in *The Incorporation of America*.¹

That mass culture emerges at this moment has been asserted in studies of a variety of new products and practices, including amusement parks, movies, and nightlife (Kasson, Peiss, Erenberg, May). Ohmann's explanation of the emergence of mass culture in the rise of the first national mass medium, the mass circulation magazine and the attendant rise of national advertising and the development of brand names may not be original either (as Schneirov's review asserts), but it is, I would argue the first book to successfully make the case. This is true not only because Ohmann offers a theoretically informed analysis of the relations of both production and mediation, but also because of his recognition that the emergence of mass culture is inextricably bound up with the emergence of a professional-managerial class (PMC). The PMC includes those who wrote, edited, and created the advertisements for the new magazines, but the real importance of this class is as the audience for the magazines and their ads, and as the largest market for the consumer goods they were trying to sell.

The recognition of the centrality of the PMC solves several problems apparent in earlier attempts to get at the social transformation

so many have recognized. Most theories of mass or popular culture have had trouble specifying its relationship to class. For example, Horkheimer and Adorno seem to treat mass culture as a conspiracy of the bourgeoisie against the working class. The populists who first studied mass cultural materials began from a folkloric perspective, treating industrially produced culture as an expression of the people. This position was made more sophisticated when it was reformulated to argue that working-class audiences made use of mass culture for their own purposes, thereby turning it into an expression of resistance. What these conceptions all share is the assumption that only two classes are socially and politically significant. Marx may be right that these classes will ultimately be the ones that matter, but the emergence and development of mass culture is not convincingly explained in terms of this model.

While no one disputes the fact that the culture industry was capitalist and therefore owned by the bourgeoisie, it is much less clear for whom that industry produced its goods. It is clear that the working class could not have been the intended audience of the magazines Ohmann discusses in *Selling Culture*, since that class could not have afforded the commodities these magazines were advertising. Since the bourgeoisie itself was neither large enough to sustain these magazines, nor likely to be interested in either their editorial or advertising content, one can only conclude that mass culture emerged for some third class. Ohmann persuasively argues that that class must itself be an emerging one, the PMC, rather than, say, the traditional petite bourgeoisie. By arguing that the new mass culture had the PMC as its audience, Ohmann is able to show how the magazines and their ads served useful ends. As I have argued elsewhere, *Selling Culture* is an exemplary study of the social construction of use-value, which is treated as a genuine problem in need of historical investigation.² Rather than assuming that capitalists sold products primarily through mystification as Marxist theories of commodity fetishism and Frankfurt school theories of reification have maintained, *Selling Culture* shows how advertising helped produce new use-values at the turn of the century. Ohmann's history leaves us with the recognition of the popularity of consumer goods and of mass culture. He observes that resistance to the new consumer economy at the turn of the century came only from those wholesalers and merchants who were displaced by department stores and national distribution of brand-name goods (*Selling Culture* 80). Consumers wanted the goods and experiences capitalists had for sale, and that fact helped to assure the power of their hegemony.

Ohmann treats magazines and their ads as powerful forms of education that worked because the information they provided was valuable. Like all use-value, it derived from the social context, a major factor of which was the rapid turn-of-the-century economic transformation itself. Home production declined as more and more people became wageworkers, and this required them to learn about consumer goods. For goods such as bicycles and motorcars, such learning involved a great deal of practical information. For

other goods, such as soap or furniture that involved no new functions, new cultural meanings are apparent. Thus Ohmann suggests that the meaning of mass-produced home furnishings for the middle class shifts from the mid-century identification projected in formal display in the parlor to an “esthetic of sensible living, which required no formal display for its justification” (*Selling Culture* 149). For Ohmann this kind of shift is evidence of mass culture helping to build the PMC as a class.

Selling Culture, I am arguing, solves some major theoretical problems in cultural studies. It offers a way to deal with mass culture that avoids the opposition of mystification and resistance, and it explains how this new form of culture nurtured an emerging social class. It does this by careful investigation of historical evidence, a method that one might think would make the conclusions all the more compelling. Judging by the reviews, most readers did find Ohmann’s arguments compelling, yet the book seems to be much less influential than it ought to be.

Assessing the influence of a living scholar is not an easy task. This is especially true when one takes cultural studies as one’s frame of reference. Since the field lacks a governing professional organization publishing the leading journal, one must survey the publications from the various disciplines and interdisciplinary projects that contribute to it. Because of this, it is virtually impossible to decide if a particular citation comes from outside of the field. The two tools that I used to measure the reception of *Selling Culture*, the Book Review Index and the Web of Science, provide helpful but limited information. Because citations in books are not covered by the Web of Science, a major piece of influence remains inaccessible to researchers. Still, I think these two databases provide enough information to support my hypothesis that *Selling Culture* has had a limited impact.

The reviews of *Selling Culture* were uniformly positive, but it was reviewed in only three scholarly venues, *American Literary History*, *Journal of American History*, and *Victorian Periodicals Review*. In the *American Literary History*, R. F. Bogardus observes that “Ohmann grapples directly and thoroughly with pertinent theoretical and methodological questions,” and notes his invocation of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony as an improvement over the Frankfurt School. This reviewer’s own agenda is advertising, rather than mass culture or magazines. The result is that Ohmann’s book comes off as the widest ranging of three studies of that phenomenon. Matthew Schneirov’s review in *Journal of American History* provides a more general assessment of Ohmann’s achievement, calling it “an impressive effort to explain the emergence of mass culture in terms of the corporate transformation of American society at the turn of the twentieth century” (284). He goes on to note the originality of Ohmann’s argument that popular magazines were written for the emerging PMC and expressed its worldview. It is to the point of my essay to observe that Bogardus, writing explicitly in the name of cultural studies, takes special note of Ohmann’s theory, but is relatively uninterested in his history. The historian, on the

other hand, while acknowledging the book's theoretical sophistication, is clearly more interested in its historical claims. The more narrowly focused *Victorian Periodicals Review* credits Ohmann with "the creative use of periodicals as a foundation for the study of popular, material culture" (192).³

In *Web of Science*, we find that *Selling Culture* has been cited in scholarly journals approximately 50 times, not counting reviews, interviews, or Ohmann's citation of himself. That is a respectable number to be sure, and many journals on the list are unambiguously representative of cultural studies, including *Media, Culture and Society*, *Theory and Society*, *Cultural Critique*, and *Screen*. Others are recognizably literary journals, which are often significant outlets for cultural studies in the U.S. Many, however, seem to be more narrowly focused venues such as *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, and it is harder to gage the significance of these citations. But when we compare the number of citations of *Selling Culture* to that of major books by scholars typically recognized as leaders in cultural studies, the disparity is striking. During their first nine years in print Jameson's *Postmodernism* was cited 666 times, Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* 608 times, Donna Haraway's *Primate Visions* 350 times, and Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance* 258 times.⁴ The comparison to Jameson, a member of Ohmann's generation as Williams reminds us, is most revealing. Like Ohmann, Jameson is a traditionally trained Marxist literary critic working here with materials that go well beyond those typically understood as literary. Like *Selling Culture*, *Postmodernism* is a historical argument about what distinguishes contemporary culture from its predecessors. So why should Jameson's book have been so much more influential? There are doubtless some adventitious factors such as Jameson having taught at major research institutions such as Yale and Duke, while Ohmann spent his career at the much smaller and more liberal-arts oriented Wesleyan. But the disparity is largely the result of the assumptions and practices that have been dominant in cultural studies. In particular, Jameson's use of history is much more consonant with these than is Ohmann's.

The leading American Marxist literary critic and theorist, Jameson, is known for his command to "always historicize" (*Political Unconscious* 9).⁵ Historicizing, however, is not the same as doing history. In general, Jameson's "historicizing" is basically a kind of taxonomy by which texts are classified and interpreted. The taxonomy is based on modes of production, largely received from earlier Marxist discourse, though Jameson has himself been a leading voice in trying to establish the existence and character of a "postmodern" mode of production. What Jameson has not given us is actual historical research, whether of literature, other cultural products, or of social or economic conditions. Jameson invokes history, but he does not practice it. There is no significant historical research behind *Postmodernism*, which is rather a series of often brilliant readings of contemporary (that is postmodernist) works of art, placing these in comparison to somewhat older, (modernist) works. Rather than analyzing complex relations of production and

reception, *Postmodernism* is content to observe formal and thematic homologies among works in different media and discontinuities between the periods.

But even Jameson's approach is more historically minded than most work in cultural studies. As Michael Sprinker observes, "If it be granted that culture is definitely a social phenomenon, it is equally—and just as a consequence of its sociality—a historical phenomenon. With some honorable exceptions, mostly in the work of professional historians, the second assertion rarely receives more than lip service in the dominant traditions of cultural studies" (390). But why should this be the case? Sprinker seems to suggest that it is the function of the kind of things the field typically studies—contemporary mass culture such as movies, television, and pulp novels. But these objects are not inherently ahistorical. The salience of the opposition between Frankfurt School mystification and Birmingham School resistance is a somewhat more convincing explanation, but these theories are also not inherently ahistorical. My argument is that cultural studies' resistance to history derives from the literary theory, especially Marxist versions of that theory, and from the practice of literary studies more generally.

It is, of course, curious that the rise of Marxist theory in literary and cultural studies should have produced (or at least, not mitigated) resistance to history. Marxism is typically understood as an historical materialism, and Marxists seem to be constantly reminding us of the significance of history. This absence may be the result of the low repute into which literary history had fallen when Jameson was being trained in the 1950s. While literary historians continued to be influential in most literature departments, the most prestigious practice within literary studies was already criticism, and the New Critics were fast taking over the field. Jameson's Marxism obviously put him at odds with the New Critical command to eschew everything extrinsic to a text, but the New Criticism nevertheless defined the way in which his opposition would manifest itself in an alternative practice. His earliest work explored alternative theories, while he at the same time presented his own interpretations of literary works. His goal was not a new understanding of historical events or even texts as historical events, but to offer new interpretations of texts in accordance with Marxist theory—including its narrative of history. Marxist criticism was constrained by the disciplinary opposition of criticism and history.

Marxist criticism was also constrained by the way history was treated within Marxist theory itself. There, "history" has since Marx himself had two opposing meanings. On the one hand, there is history deriving from Hegel as a philosophy and master narrative. In this conception, there is paradoxically, nothing to be gained from actually studying the details of history, since its broad outline can be understood theoretically. This "philosophy of history" allows us to understand the meaning of events both past and present—or rather, it determines their meaning. While there might be arguments over the correct application of the theory or even over the facts of an event, no amount of research can change the historical

narrative itself. Marx, of course, found Hegel's philosophy of history instructive, but his own work also reveals another attitude toward history. Marx didn't merely correct Hegel theoretically. He wrote *Capital* by researching capitalism in the British Library, apparently assuming that the details of history were significant. This empirical aspect of Marx's work, however, has been more honored than imitated within Marxism. Marxism claimed scientific status in part as result of this work, but it also often seemed to regard further empirical study as unnecessary.

In recent times, these two Marxist conceptions of history have been personified in the opposition of E. P. Thompson and Louis Althusser.⁶ Thompson, usually regarded as one of the founding fathers of British cultural studies, was a professional historian. As one of a number of academically based British Marxists who rejected Stalinism and the Communist Party in the early to mid 1950s, he was a significant figure in the British New Left. Althusser, usually regarded as the most influential Marxist among French structuralist and poststructuralist intellectuals, was a professional philosopher. While many among his intellectual cohort left the French Communist Party, Althusser remained a loyal member for most of his life. While Thompson seems to think that Althusser's "Stalinism" is the most salient explanation for his theory and thus their differences, I want to argue that different theoretical investments inculcated by training in various disciplines are more fundamental. Within the humanities, there is no greater gulf than the divide between historians and philosophers. This opposition is rooted in the one between the particular and the general. Historians are trained to focus on the details of the past. The particular matters because that's what one finds in the documents that make up the historians' materials. Philosophers are as committed to generalities as historians are to particulars. Specific cases in philosophy typically exist only to illustrate general claims, which is why philosophers' examples are so often impoverished, as in numerous discussions of chairs and tables, or, in analytic philosophy, of sentences such as "The present King of France is bald." For philosophers, historical differences must ultimately be trivial, and the specificity of a past moment can only be an obstacle to their quest for transhistorical truths.

This disciplinary opposition seldom is expressed explicitly by philosophers, who usually ignore history rather than attack it. But Althusser, because he was a Marxist, did not have this option open to him. Althusser deserves credit for actually expressing overt opposition to history, thereby revealing a significant weakness in much Marxist theory. Most Marxist philosophers have claimed history even if they did not take it seriously as a form of knowledge production. Althusser, on the contrary, argues that Marx himself was not interested in history: "history features in *Capital* as an object of theory, not as a real object, as an 'abstract' (conceptual) object and not as a real-concrete object" (*Reading Capital* 117). In case one thinks that there is some theoretical fudging going on here, the Althusserians Barry Hindness and Paul Hirst make the

point incontrovertibly: “Marxism as a theoretical and a political practice, gains nothing from its association with historical writing and historical research. The study of history is not only scientifically but also politically valueless” (*Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* 312, quoted in Thompson). Althusser’s theoretical grounds for the dismissal of history seem to be the conflation of the empirical with empiricism. “We must once again purify our concept of the theory of history, and purify it radically, of any contamination by the obviousness of empirical history, since we know that this ‘empirical history’ is merely the bare face of the empiricist ideology of history” (*Reading Capital* 105). Apparently, any appeal to evidence is to Althusser an example of empiricism.

While this extreme position is hardly typical of philosophers Marxist or otherwise, it is all too typical of literary critics, especially those operating after the rise of literary theory in the 1970s. In its practice, literary studies has traditionally fallen somewhere between history and philosophy on the scale of the particular and general. While literary scholars have always been interested to some degree in the particularities of individual texts, they have also typically regarded such texts as having transhistorical value and meaning. Hence they have tended to move between textual details and generalities that may derive from philosophy, science, and even history, but also from religion and other ideologies. During the era of philology and literary history, literary scholarship was often long on textual details and historical facts, but short on arguments demonstrating the meaning of those particulars. With New Criticism and the change in scholarly practice it brought about, historical research proper became much less significant in literature departments. The scrutiny of individual texts became greater, but so did the invocation of broader systems of meaning—for example, Christian morality in the work of many of the original New Critics. Indeed, we could argue that the work of literary interpretation was principally to draw such connections between textual particulars and various general systems of meaning. The rise of literary theory, which became a dominant practice in the 1980s, meant that the balance shifted from text to system. Instead of using the system to shed light on the text, literary scholars often treated texts as teaching lessons about how things mean. In this context, literary history fell further out of favor. Thus, in 1986, John Frow could publish *Marxism and Literary History* in which literary history is treated as a purely theoretical category, rather than something one might actually research. Around the same time, de Man could, in trying to explain the literary studies’ resistance to theory, disparage history:

What is it about literary theory that is so threatening that it provokes such strong resistance and attacks?...All this is ample enough reason for suspicion, but not a satisfying answer to question. For it makes the tension between contemporary literary theory and the tradition of literary studies appear as a mere historical conflict between two modes of thought that happen to hold the

stage at the same time. If the conflict is merely historical, in the literal sense, it is of limited theoretical interest, a passing squall in the intellectual weather of the world. (11-12)

De Man, the champion of literary theory, goes on to argue that resistance to theory can only be understood as internal to theory itself.

In the United States, cultural studies was heavily influenced by these trends in literary studies. As Stuart Hall observed in 1990 at the now famous Cultural Studies Conference in Urbana, Illinois, cultural studies in the United States already exhibited tremendous “theoretical fluency” but also an “overwhelming textualization” of its own discourses that seemed to make “power and politics... exclusively matters of language and textuality itself” (286). But even in Britain, where Thompson and Williams were major influences, history was not a major activity within cultural studies, although that absence provoked some anxiety. At the same conference, historian Carolyn Steedman’s paper seems to have been invited as a response to that anxiety. But she questioned whether there was a role for historical research within cultural studies: “Why does cultural studies *want* history? What does wanting it mean?... Will there be any room for detailed historical work; or are students of cultural studies bound to rely on great schematic and secondary sweeps through time?” (621). Another historian, Catherine Hall, who presented one of the few pieces of historical research to be offered at the conference, noted, “relatively little published work from the [Birmingham] Centre has been historical ... Theory, with a big ‘T’ was always privileged over history, which ought to have been spelt with an ‘e’ for the dreaded empiricism... [T]he encounter between mainstream history and cultural studies in Britain has been extremely limited” (271).

It is the confusion of *empiricism* and *empirical* that is at the root of the failure of *Selling Culture* and books like it to become the exemplars they should be. *Empiricism* is a theory about what may count as truth and how knowledge may be discovered. Its primary function is to limit knowledge and truth by discounting everything not known on the basis of what it holds to be “observable” facts. It denies the status of knowledge to theories that precede evidence, a position that, if rigorously applied, would eliminate all systematic understanding. As a result, Empiricism proper is a position virtually no philosopher holds these days. But one need not be an empiricist to allow that *empirical* evidence may support or undermine the theories that all investigators must bring to their inquiries. Literary critics admit this when they cite textual features in support of their interpretations. Cultural studies has been willing to accept ethnographic research as providing evidence for its claims about contemporary culture—probably because such research seems to give voice to audiences. But the idea that contemporary culture can be understood by researching its emergence in earlier periods has been largely rejected as unnecessary.

A rigid empiricism denies the value and legitimacy of speculation. But speculation is one of the most valuable aspects of literary criticism and theory. Indeed, one might argue that literature (together with fictions in other media) itself remains one of the places where writers and readers are encouraged to dwell in the realm of the speculative. But literary critics and theorists have tended to value speculations so highly that they have ignored the need to try to confirm or disconfirm them.⁸ Cultural studies has inherited this tendency from its disciplinary elder. The field prefers big ideas, and eschews the work of demonstrating their accuracy. A brilliant reading is almost always more influential than a well-supported argument. I understand this as a reasonable aesthetic judgment, but not a very useful one for a field that had the ambition to explain how culture functions socially and politically. To study the contemporary should not mean to study it in a temporal vacuum. Cultural studies desperately needs more books that, like *Selling Culture*, explain the history of the present.

Notes

¹On Trachtenberg, see Shumway, "Incorporation." Economists and historians include Kolko, Baran and Sweezy, Wiebe, and Sklar.

²This discussion is adapted from Shumway, "Fetishizing Fetishism" (13).

³The reviews in *the Nation* (Vanderbilt) and in *TLS* (Kenner) are less analytic, but are detailed and positive, and do demonstrate the interest of *Selling Culture* beyond the academy.

⁴I searched the Arts and Humanities, and Social Science data bases. Haraway's book may have been cited in natural science journals as well. These statistics are obviously crude. I have not endeavored to analyze them as I did with those to *Selling Culture*, so they may include self-references and reviews. However, these counts exclude citations that list these texts under another date, so they may in fact be undercounts. One explanation for some of the disparity is identity politics. Unlike the books by Gilroy, Haraway, or Radway, there is no clear identity group that the *Selling Culture* could hail.

⁵In comparing Jameson and Ohmann, it is not my intention to denigrate the former or to suggest that the latter is to be preferred; I regard both as indispensable figures for cultural studies.

⁶The discussion that follows is indebted to Thompson's critique of Althusser in *The Poverty of Theory*.

⁷The resistance to theory de Mann discusses was most often made in the name of literature, not history, but it was overt. Resistance to history in literary and cultural studies is not usually so forthrightly expressed; indeed, both fields are likely to claim history even as they avoid it as a practice.

⁸See Shumway, "The Star System Revisited," 179-180, for a discussion of decline of persuasion in literary studies.

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